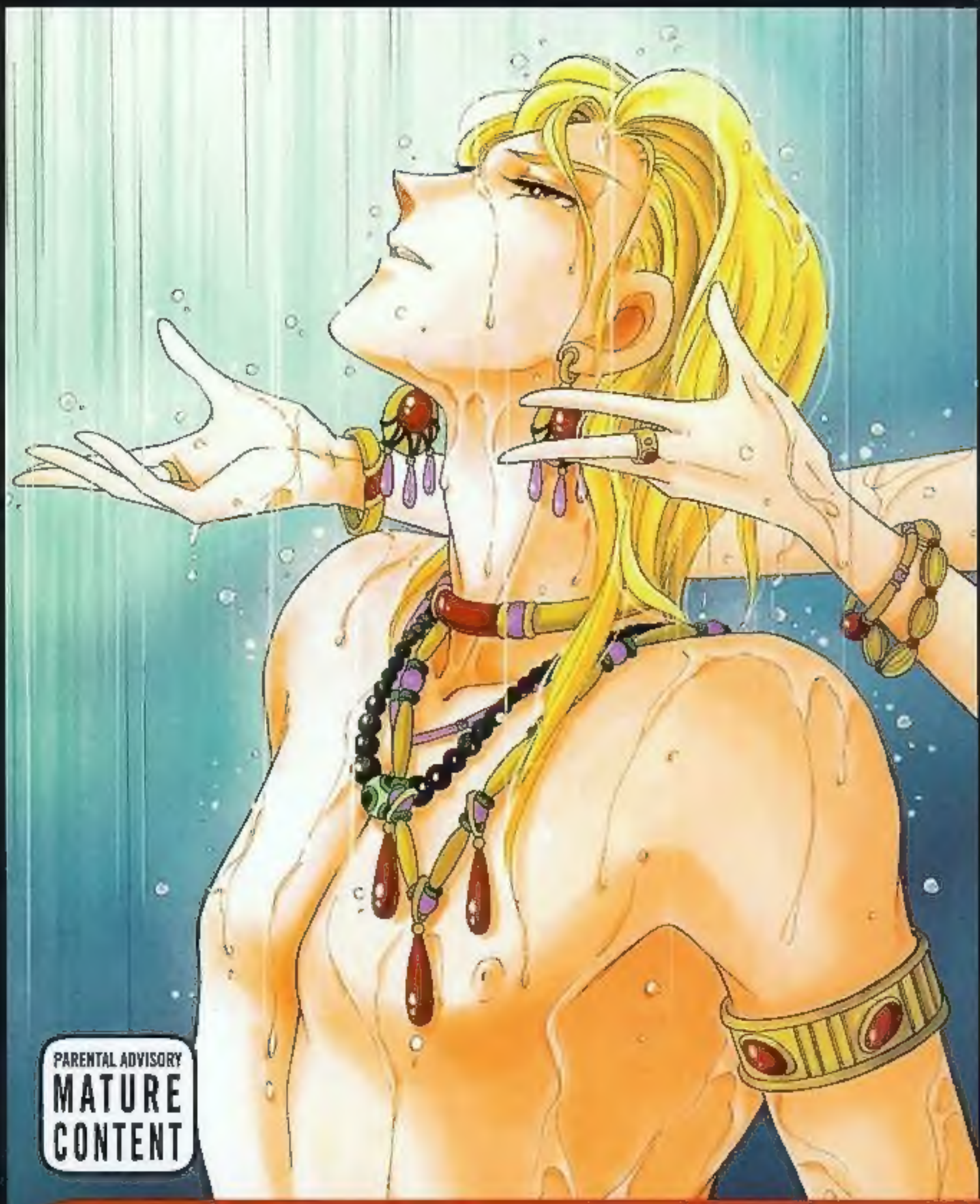
RED RIVER



PARENTAL ADVISORY
MATURE CONTENT

23

story and art by **Chie Shinohara**

Story Thus Far:

Mursili II
The former Crown Prince Kail, now king of the Hittite Empire.

Yuri
A Japanese schoolgirl magically transported to the ancient Hittite Empire.

Ramses
Ambitious general of the Egyptian army and Kail's equal as a leader and visionary.

Junior high student Yuri is sucked through time and space to the ancient Hittite Empire! Evil Queen Nakia has drawn Yuri there to be a sacrifice to her god, Teshub. Rescued by the handsome and haughty Prince Kail, Yuri falls in love with him and decides to stay in the past.

Yuri's rebel forces attack and take control of the city of Thebes, breaking into Nefertiti's palace just in time to rescue Ramses. A search of Nefertiti's private quarters turns up conclusive evidence of her collusion with Nakia. With this evidence in hand, and her identity now revealed to Nefertiti, Yuri realizes it's time to return home. Knowing what her fate would be if he tried to keep Yuri in Egypt, Ramses offers no interference.

Assuming command of the Egyptian army, Ramses quickly puts down the rebellion. Meanwhile, Yuri and her aides board a ship and set out for Hittite territory. Taharqa, the rebel leader, is enraged with Yuri's seeming abandonment of the rebels and their cause and attempts to head off her escape. He is thwarted by Ramses who, unknown to Taharqa, has promised Yuri that he will hear the rebels' grievances.

When Yuri's ship reaches Byblos, she learns that city has recently been taken by Hittite troops led by Kail. But Kail has returned to Ugarit, so Yuri jumps on a horse and heads there at top speed!

KAIL...

KAIL...

KAIL...

KAIL!

I SHOULD LET HIM SLEEP... HE LOOKS SO...

MMMM...

RUSTLE

...?!

WHO DARES-?!

THUD

YEEK!

KAIL, IT...IT'S *ME*...

I DIDN'T WANT TO DISTURB YOU...

...BUT I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF... AND I FORGOT...

THE SAME DREAM I'VE BEEN HAVING EVERY NIGHT?

IS THIS A DREAM ...?

GASP

JUST LIKE YOU ARE, RIGHT NOW AND...

I PROMISE, IT'S REAL... *I'M* REAL!

IT'S NOT A DREAM, KAIL...

OH GOD...

IT REALLY *IS* YOU, YURI!

...AND I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH.

YES, I HAVE...

YOU'VE COME BACK TO ME!

IF I WOKE UP NOW, I...

YURI...

OH, KAIL!

FWUM

HE'S REAL, I'M REAL...

...AND WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN AT LAST!

FWOOM

BUT... BUT IT *CAN'T!*

I WANT THIS *MOMENT* TO LAST FOREVER AND EVER AND...

NO DREAM COULD BE AS WONDERFUL AS THIS!

EVEN WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN THROUGH, THIS *MOMENT* MAKES IT ALL WORTHWHILE!

SHOVE

WHAT...?

...I LOST OUR BABY, KAIL!

I LOST...

KAIL... KAIL, I'M SO SORRY!

OUR BABY!

PLEASE FORGIVE ME!

WHAT IS THERE TO FORGIVE?

YOU DIDN'T TAKE THE CHILD FROM US.

HE'S IN HEAVEN NOW, AND WISHES US ONLY HAPPINESS.

THE GODS FELL IN LOVE WITH HIM...

...AND WANTED HIM BACK, THAT'S ALL.

FOR ME, THE GREATEST SORROW WOULD HAVE BEEN TO LOSE YOU...

KAIL!

BAM

...AND BY ALL THAT'S HOLY, I'VE BEEN SPARED THAT.

I ASK FOR NOTHING ELSE.

HEY!

IS IT TRUE PRINCESS YURI'S RETURNED?!

HAS HIS MAJESTY—

WHOOP

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?!

WHO TRIPPED ME?!

KASH! RUSAFA!

I DID, BIG MOUTH.

WE'D RATHER YOU DIDN'T DISTURB THEM.

PRINCESS YURI IS WITH HIS MAJESTY.

SHE'LL ARRIVE LATER WITH ILBANI AND HADI.

SHE REMAINED IN BYBLOS TO RECUPERATE.

...

WHAT?

I REGRET TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT RYUI ISN'T HERE.

EESH

WHAT'S *WRONG* WITH HER?

IS SHE SICK OR SOMETHING?

YES, ESPECIALLY SINCE SHE'S GOING TO MAKE YOU A FATHER.

NICE TO SEE YOU'RE CONCERNED.

...PREGNANT?!

A FATHER?

YOU MEAN RYUI IS...

SMACK

SLAP!

KOFF

THE BEST TAVERN, THE FINEST WINE, YOUR TREAT!

EXACTLY SO!

WHICH CALLS FOR A ROUND OF DRINKS!

PRINCESS YURI IS BACK, SO ALL'S RIGHT WITH HIS MAJESTY'S WORLD. HE'LL BE DELIGHTED FOR YOU!

DON'T GIVE IT A THOUGHT, KIKKUR.!

THIS IS GREAT NEWS...

...BUT WITH HIS MAJESTY'S LOSS, I CAN'T...

KOFF

KOFF

NOW FOR THAT WINE!

PRINCESS YURI...

MAY I ASK...

...WHY RAMSES...

...DIDN'T FORCE HIMSELF ON YOU?

...HE DIDN'T?

HOW... HOW DO YOU KNOW...

I CAN TELL.

YOUR REACTION TO MY TOUCH HASN'T CHANGED.

UH!

TWITCH

KAIL!

YOU STILL RESPOND JUST AS YOU ALWAYS HAVE.

THEN I'LL FIND SOMETHING FINER FOR YOU TO WEAR.

UNTIL THEN...

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NECKLACE THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS GAVE YOU?

OH... I GAVE IT...

MRM...!

?!

...OR RATHER, RETURNED IT... TO QUEEN NEFERTITI.

I SEE.

KAIL...

D...DON'T!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?

IF YOU LEAVE A MARK ON MY NECK, EVERYONE WILL SEE IT!

THE TIME I SPENT WITH MY TROOPS AT THE FRONT WAS QUITE A STRAIN...

WAIT, KAIL!

...WHICH I ENDURED...

...BY THINKING OF YOU, AND REMEMBERING TIMES LIKE THIS.

TOMORROW I'LL RESUME MY DUTIES AS KING OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE.

BUT TONIGHT, WITH YOU, I'M JUST KAIL.

THE WORLD CAN GO ON WITHOUT ME... AND YOU... FOR THAT LONG, I THINK.

THERE'S SO MUCH I WANT TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT, THINGS THAT HAPPENED WHILE WE WERE APART...

...THINGS WE NEED TO DEAL WITH...

...PLAGUES ON THE PRESENT... THREATS TO THE FUTURE... I CAN'T SEEM TO FOCUS...

...ON ANY OF THAT RIGHT NOW.

IS MELTING ALL MY THOUGHTS AWAY

THE WARMTH OF HIS EMBRACE AND THE FEEL OF HIS SKIN ON MINE...

...FAR TOO MANY RULERS HAVE...

...INDULGED THEIR APPETITES...

...TO THE NEGLECT OF AFFAIRS OF STATE, BRINGING THEIR NATIONS TO RUIN.

WE CITIZENS OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE...

...YOUR MAJESTY.

...DO NOT NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT, FOR WHICH I AM EXTREMELY GRATEFUL...

YAWN

EVEN IF I WANTED TO DO THAT...

TIME FOR YOUR MORNING REVIEW OF THE ROYAL GUARDS!

YOUR MAJESTY!

KLOP

HEY! ILBANI!

...MY LADY WOULD NEVER ALLOW IT!

WHEN DID YOU ARRIVE?

...TO SEE YOU LOOKING SO WELL, PRINCESS YURI.

EARLY THIS MORNING. I'M PLEASED...

YOU'RE BACK! HADI, RYU! AND SHALA TOO! THAT'S GREAT!

...HAVE YOU GIVEN THE ITEM TO HIS MAJESTY?

PRIN-CESS YURI...

YAY!! HADI!

OUR SHIP SAILED FROM RASHID...

...SOON AFTER YOURS.

YES...

...THIS MORNING. HE...

CERTAINLY, S.R.

WE HAVE THINGS TO DISCUSS, ILBANI.

SEE ME IN MY OFFICE AFTER THE REVIEW.

KAIL...

A SOUVENIR FROM EGYPT, YOU MIGHT SAY.

...I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU.

TO BE PRECISE, A LETTER ADDRESSED TO NEFERTITI.

YES. ILBANI AND RAMSES CONFIRMED IT.

IS... IS THIS *GENUINE* ?!

...WITH *QUEEN NAKIA'S PERSONAL SEAL!*

AN INTACT LETTER TO NEFERTITI...

YOU SUSPECTED QUEEN NAKIA WAS PASSING INFORMATION...

...TO THE EGYPTIANS, BUT SHE WAS TOO CAREFUL TO LEAVE CONCRETE PROOF IN HITTITE TERRITORY.

WHAT SHE DIDN'T ANTICIPATE WAS OUR FINDING IT IN EGYPT.

WOULD YOU LIKE...

.. TO HAVE BREAKFAST IN THE ROOM NEXT TO H S MAJESTY'S OFFICE?

PRINCESS YURI?

EH?

OH... SURE.

YAK YAK

THERE'S A SOBERING THOUGHT...

YURI, YOU MAY VERY WELL HAVE CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY!

FLIGHT

LOVE MUST GIVE YOU SPECIAL SIGHT.

WE'RE IMPRESSED, KIKKURI.

IT'S AMAZING YOU CAN EVEN TELL THE TWINS APART!

KIKKURI! THE TWINS HAVE RETURNED, Y'KNOW.

HAVE YOU SEEN RYLI? HAVE YOU TALKED WITH HER?

RYLI MAY HAVE TWINS, SO YOU MIGHT WANNA BRACE YOURSELF!

Baby?

UM... NO, NOT YET...

RYU!? BUT...

...SHALA'S THE ONE WHO'S PREGNANT.

Funny if she did have twins...

WHY NOT? AREN'T YOU ANXIOUS TO BE WITH THE MOTHER OF YOUR BABY?

WHAAT?!

I DIDN'T KNOW SHALA AND KIKKURI WERE AN ITEM.

HOW SWEET!

We thought Kikkuri was seeing Ryu!

Couldn't tell 'em apart after all.

Hear that?

WE BOTH SAW KIKKURI WITHOUT TELLING HIM.

GIGGLE

WE SHARE THE SAME TASTE IN FOOD...

MEN. CATS AND DOGS..

OH, YES MA'AM!

...YOU WILL LOOK AFTER *BOTH* MY SISTERS, RIGHT?

KIKKURI...

YOUR TRIP TO EGYPT WAS A FRUITFUL ONE, ILBANI. ONCE I PRESENT THIS LETTER..
...TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, THAT WILL BE THE END OF NAKIA.
AS I'D EXPECTED, SIR.
ALL CREDIT FOR THIS MUST GO TO PRINCESS YURI, HOWEVER.

WILL YOU RETURN TO HATTUSA IMMEDIATELY, YOUR MAJESTY?

I DID ADVISE HER TO INSTIGATE THE REBELLION IN ASWAN, BUT SHE MADE IT HAPPEN...

IMMEDI-ATELY ...?

NO, ILBANI...

...AND TO SUCH EFFECT THAT WE REACHED THEBES AND WERE ABLE TO SEARCH THE PALACE OF QUEEN NEFERTITI.

THE WAR, FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, IS LIKELY TO ESCALATE.

WITH QUEEN NEFERTITI OUT OF THE WAY, EGYPT WILL BE ABLE TO FOCUS ON THE CONFLICT WITH US.

AND WITH RAMSES FREE TO LEAD THEM, THE EGYPTIAN ARMY WILL REGAIN ITS FOOTING IN SHORT ORDER. I HAVE NO DOUBT THEY'LL BE EAGER TO RETAKE BYBLOS.

THE WAR... ESCALATE...

IF THERE WAS EVER A TIME FOR ME TO STAY WITH MY TROOPS, IT'S NOW.

...SO I NEEDN'T ELABORATE ON WHAT I'M ASKING OF YOU.

CHK

YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO THE DESTINY OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE AS WELL AS I DO...

ILBAN...

...I ENTRUST QUEEN NAKIA'S LETTER TO YOU.

VERY WELL, SIR.

I UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY.

OF COURSE, SIR.

PRINCESS YURI, YOUR BREAKFAST IS READY.

OH... THANK YOU, HADI.

AND SO WE'RE YANKED BACK INTO THE AFFAIRS OF THE WORLD!

I'M BETTING WE AIN'T SEEN NUTHIN' YET!

THANK YOU. IT IS GOOD TO BE BACK.

WE'RE SO PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO SERVE YOU AGAIN.

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SAFE RETURN, ISHTAR.

KAIL...?

IS KAL THE FIRST PERSON IN HISTORY TO EVER SAY THAT?

IT WILL BE TERRIBLE, AND THERE'S NO AVOIDING IT. BUT IF THE WILL AND THE POWERS OF MYSELF AND MY NATION ARE UP TO IT, AS I BELIEVE THEY ARE, WE WILL MAKE THIS THE WAR TO END ALL WARS.

THAT'S RIGHT.

SO I WANT THIS UPCOMING CONFLICT WITH EGYPT TO BE THE LAST.

KAL HAD HOPED TO WORK SIDE BY SIDE WITH HIS BROTHER PRINCE ZANNANZA TO ACHIEVE IT.

WITH HIS BROTHER GONE, KAL HAS HAD TO PURSUE THAT DREAM ALONE.

A GRAND, WONDERFUL DREAM!

YOU SAW THE HITTITES NOT AS AGGRESSORS, OR THE VICTIMS OF AGGRESSION...

...BUT AS A STRONG NATION DEDICATED TO BRINGING PEACE AND STABILITY TO THE ORIENT.

IS SUCH A THING POSSIBLE?

YOU REMEMBER BEFORE I BECAME KING...

...I SAID I HAD A VISION TO TRANSFORM THE EMPIRE INTO AN IDEAL NATION?

OF COURSE I REMEMBER.

YOU'RE NOT EATING. WHAT'S WRONG?

I'M JUST THINKING...

...ABOUT THIS WAR, AND IF IT WAS POSSIBLE TO MAKE IT THE LAST ONE THE EMPIRE EVER HAS TO FIGHT.

PFT

DON'T GET ME WRONG...

...I KNOW I SPEAK MORE OF HOPE THAN CERTAINTY.

AFTER ALL, HOW CAN ONE MAN CHANGE FUNDA-MENTAL HUMAN INCLINATION?

NEVER-THELESS, I CAN AT LEAST INSURE THAT MY NATION FIGHTS NO MORE WARS DURING MY REIGN.

OF THIS I'M CERTAIN...

I WONDER IF ANYONE ELSE THINKS SO?

...BUT YOU...

IT IS A TALL ORDER, KAIL...

...CAN ACHIEVE IT, IF ANYONE CAN.

HIS FINGERS GET COLD AS ICE

WHEN KAL IS NERVOUS

THE BURDEN ON HIS SHOULDERS IS ENORMOUS, AND THERE ARE SO MANY EXPECTATIONS.

...AS CERTAIN AS I AM THAT I LOVE YOU.

AT LEAST I CAN.

MMM

THOSE COLD FINGERS, AND HIS LIPS.

YOU'RE RIGHT, YURI.

...AND STAY AT HIS SIDE FOR AS LONG AS I LIVE.

WITH ISHTAR THE GODDESS OF WAR STANDING WITH ME, I CAN SEE IT THROUGH.

AND WHEN ISHTAR'S WORK...

...IS DONE, I'LL STILL BE YOUR BELOVED YURI.

IN THE UPCOMING CONFLICT...

...YOU WILL TRIUMPH, KAIL. HAVE NO DOUBT OF IT!

AND HAVE NO DOUBT WE ARE TOGETHER... *FOREVER!*

THE SCOUT SENT TO EGYPT HAS RETURNED!

YOUR MAJESTY!

HIS FORCE IS EXPECTED TO NUMBER OVER 20,000!

THE GENERALS FROM THE PROVINCES ARE JOINING HIM AS HE ADVANCES!

YOUR MAJESTY!

PHARAOH HOREMHEB HAS LEFT THEBES AT THE HEAD OF HIS ARMY!

SUMMON ALL INFANTRY BATTALIONS AND ARCHERY AND CHARIOT UNITS TO UGARIT!

OH GOD... IT'S WAR, *ALL-OUT WAR!*

YES, SIR!

RECRUIT AS MANY TROOPS AS POSSIBLE, ANYWHERE YOU CAN FIND THEM!

GAS

20,000?!

FOR THIS ERA, THAT'S *IMMENSE!*

SEND WORD TO EVERY CORNER OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE, ITS ALLIES AND TRIBUTARIES!

THERE ARE RUMORS OF A HUGE BATTLE BREWING.

IF SO, THE PALACE WILL BE STOCKED TO THE CEILINGS WITH SUPPLIES.

OH, THEN I'LL DO SOME GROCERY SHOPPING.

THAT'S NOT YOUR JOB.

BUT YURI ISHTAR LOVES DRIED JUJUBES.

WE DON'T WANT TO RUN OUT.

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!

I'LL TAKE A BASKET-FUL.

THESE JUJUBES ARE FROM BABYLONIA.

MA'AM..

MA'AM..

ARE YOU ADDRESS-ING ME?

YES, MA'AM. MAY I HAVE A WORD?

PARDON?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO EARN TWO SILVER SHEKELS?

HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

I...I DON'T KNOW...

PLEASE TAKE THIS AND COME WITH ME.

I JUST WANT TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS.

IT WON'T TAKE LONG, I PROMISE.

...IF YURI ISHTAR HAS BROUGHT SOMETHING BACK FROM EGYPT.

I JUST WANT TO KNOW...

...A *TOTAL STRANGER* LIKE YOU!

EVEN IF I KNEW, I WOULDN'T TELL...

I'M JUST A SERVANT! HOW CAN I KNOW ANYTHING LIKE THAT?!

CH ING

...I MUST OFFER A FURTHER INDUCEMENT...

SQUIK

IN THAT CASE...

WHEE

...TO PUT YOU IN A MORE... RECEPTIVE STATE.

I'M VERY CON-CERNED ABOUT THIS MATTER, AS IT...

...MAY REQUIRE QUICK ACTION ON MY PART.

WHAT WOULD

SLUMP

SHFF SHFF

IF THIS IS SO...

THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT QUEEN NEFERTITI HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM POWER.

AND I WONDER IF SOME KIND OF EVIDENCE LINKING HER AND QUEEN NAKIA HAS BEEN BROUGHT OUT OF EGYPT.

...THAT EVIDENCE MUST NEVER REACH HATTUSA.

RUSTLE

HATTUSA

HITTITE EMPIRE

(RED RIVER)

KANESH

KING MURSILI II OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE HAS ISSUED A DECREE...

ARZAWA

KIZWATNA

KARKEMISH

KHALEB

NEW MITANNI

UGARIT

...DIRECTING THAT ALL THE HITTITE FORCES AMASS IN UGARIT!

BE DA

BYBLOS

ASSYRIA

SIDON

"ALL ABLE-BODIED HITTITES ARE CALLED ON TO DO THEIR DUTY!"

BABYLONIA

MEMPHIS

THE KINGDOM OF EGYPT

(THE NILE)

THEBES

PRINCESS YURI!

...THE MEN RESPONDING TO HIS MAJESTY'S CALL HAVE STARTED TO ARRIVE!

PRINCESS YURI...

THAT'S ENCOURAG-ING!

ALREADY?

...IS KAL'S ELDER BROTHER!

IT'S THE ARMY OF PRINCE ROIS TELIPINU, THE GOVERNOR OF KHALEB.

I'LL GO OUT TO WELCOME THEM.

DO WE KNOW WHERE THEY CAME FROM?

THIS IS GREAT NEWS! PRINCE TELIPINU...

TROOP TROOP TROOP TROOP

ROAR

TROOM

NOT PARTICI-PATING?

YOUR LOGISTICAL SUPPORT WAS ALWAYS VITAL.

YOUR MAJESTY.

SO THIS IS IT, EH?

MY APOLOGIES FOR NOT-PARTICIPATING IN YOUR PAST CAMPAIGNS, DESPITE MY PROXIMITY TO UGARIT.

TELIPINU!

TROOM

TROOM

GREETINGS, YLRI ISHTAR. I'M PLEASED TO SEE HIS MAJESTY RETAINING A CAPABLE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FOR THIS AFFAIR.

THANK YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS.

GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, PRINCE TELIPINU.

ALL YOUR COMMANDERS ARE PRESENT AND PREPARED TO REPORT.

YOUR MAJESTY, YOUR ARMY IS NOW ASSEMBLED AND AT FULL STRENGTH.

PROCEED.

AND THE INFANTRY UNITS, SIR.

SIR! THE ROYAL GUARDS ARE READY TO MOVE OUT.

ARCHERY UNITS AS WELL, SIR. WE AWAIT YOUR ORDERS.

AS ARE THE CHARIOT UNITS, SIR.

THE TROOPS FROM KIZWATNA SHOULD ARRIVE THERE SHORTLY.

OUR ALLIES HAVE DEPLOYED THEIR FORCES AT UGARIT.

THE EGYPTIAN ARMY IS A DAUNTING FORCE.

WE CAN NEVER BE TOO READY TO FACE SUCH AN OPPONENT.

THIS FULL-SCALE MOBILIZATION IS WHAT THE ENEMY EXPECTS OF US, AND WE WILL NOT DISAPPOINT!

ROAR ROAR ROAR

I RESPECT BOTH MEN, AND CAN ONLY HOPE...

...THEIR RIVALRY DOESN'T MAR THEIR JUDGMENT!

I'M SURE KAIL IS THINKING OF RAMSES, NOT PHARAOH HOREMHEB.

AND NO DOUBT KAIL IS FOREMOST IN RAMSES' THOUGHTS.

HAS HE?!

THEN BRING HIM IN! AT ONCE!

...HAS JUST ARRIVED.

YOUR MAJESTY, A CERTAIN INDISPENSABLE ALLY...

AN INDISPENSABLE ALLY?

KLANK

YOUR MAJESTY KING MURSILI II...

IT'S A GREAT HONOR TO COME BEFORE YOU AGAIN.

KLANK

KLANK

KLANK

AH...

AND A DISTINCT PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, YURI ISHTAR.

BOSTIL

THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS!

IT'S... IT'S BEEN *AGES!*

HOW'VE YOU BEEN?

THIS IS HIS MAJESTY KING MATTIWAZA I OF THE NEW MITANNI KINGDOM.

HE IS A PRINCE NO LONGER, ISHTAR.

INDEED. AFTER HIS MAJESTY MURSILI II GRANTED ME A PARDON...

...I WAS ALLOWED TO RETURN TO MY COUNTRY AND ASCEND THE THRONE.

WOW! YOU'VE MOVED UP IN THE WORLD!

THAT'S EXCEL-LENT!

THEY WILL BE INVALUABLE, KING MATTIWAZA.

MITANNI IS RENOWNED FOR ITS CHARIOTEERS.

I HAVEN'T SEEN COMBAT FOR SOME TIME, SO I HOPE...

...I'M STILL ABLE TO REPAY YOU FOR HELPING ME REBUILD MY COUNTRY.

THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS...

SO BRUTAL THAT PEOPLE CALLED HIM THE PRINCE OF *BLOOD!*

PRIN... I MEAN, YOUR MAJESTY...

...ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS? ABOUT FIGHTING EGYPT?

YOUR ELDER SISTER IS STILL THERE, AFTER ALL...

HE WENT BACK TO BABYLONIA AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF MITANNI...

...AND NOW HE RETURNS AS A KING AND ALLY!

MY SISTER IS NO MORE THAN A FADING MEMORY.

THERE IS NOW ONLY QUEEN NEFERTITI OF EGYPT.

THAT IS OF NO MOMENT, ISHTAR.

...YOU MUST BE TIRED FROM YOUR TRAVELS, AND WE'VE WINE...

YOUR HIGHNESS, YOUR MAJESTY...

...I'VE NOTHING TO SAY TO THAT.

WELL...

GLOM

TRUP TRUP TRUP

BIG SISTER ISHTAR!

AWP!

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA!

I GOT TIRED OF WAITING FOR YOU TO RETURN TO HATTUSA SO I DECIDED TO COME HERE! ♡

ALEXANDRA, FIRST PRINCESS OF THE KINGDOM OF ARZAWA.

SHE'S BEEN SPENDING TIME IN HATTUSA AS A GUEST OF MINE.

GIGGLE ♡

I'M NOT ALONE! I CAME WITH TROOPS FROM ARZAWA! ♡

WHO'S THAT LITTLE MINX?

...I NEED TO TALK TO YOU!

YES, BUT BEFORE THAT...

WOULD YOU CARE FOR SOME WINE?

LOOKS LIKE *EVERYONE'S* COMING TO THIS PARTY.

IN FACT, MAY I SPEAK TO YOU *AND* HIS MAJESTY IN PRIVATE?

YOU...

...CAN TRUST EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM, HIGHNESS.

IN THAT CASE, I'LL SAY WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.

I'VE NEVER TRUSTED QUEEN NAKIA, AND I THINK SHE'S UP TO SOMETHING IN HATTUSA!

SHE HASN'T LEFT HER PALACE SINCE NEWS OF ISHTAR'S RETURN FROM EGYPT REACHED HATTUSA.

WELL, PRESUMPTUOUS AS IT MAY SEEM...

...I'VE BEEN KEEPING A CLOSE EYE ON HER ACTIVITIES OF LATE.

OH? SUCH AS...?

SHE'S EVEN CURTAILED HER NORMAL TEMPLE VISITATIONS.

MOST PEOPLE ARE FINE WITH THAT...

...BUT I'M CERTAIN SOMETHING FIENDISH IS AFOOT!

SHE WON'T REST UNTIL SHE DOES SOMETHING ABOUT IT!
DOES NAKIA SUSPECT I'VE BROUGHT ONE OF HER LETTERS BACK FROM EGYPT?
IF SO, WE'VE GOT TROUBLE!
PLEASE, YOUR MAJESTY, THAT'S NOT ALL I HAVE TO REPORT!
PRINCESS ALEXANDRA..
...I SALUTE YOUR INITIATIVE.

I FIND THIS SUDDEN TASTE FOR BATTLE VERY ODD.

IN FACT, IT SMELLS DOWNRIGHT FISHY.

ON THE WAY TO UGARIT, I LEARNED THE TROOPS IN KANESH ARE RALLYING FOR DEPLOYMENT.

THE GOVERNOR OF KANESH, THE SON OF QUEEN NAKIA, IS TO LEAD THEM. HE'S NEVER BEEN TO WAR, SIR!

NOT FROM ME, ILBANI.

WAS PRINCE JUDA SENT A MUSTER ORDER, SIR?

QUEEN NAKIA'S ONLY SON...

PRINCE JUDA...

SHE'S SCHEMED AND SCHEMED TO INSTALL HIM ON THE HITTITE THRONE.

AND NOW JUDA COMES TO JOIN...

...A BATTLE TO WHICH HE WAS NOT SUM-MONED!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT WAS HIS DECISION! BUT WHY WOULD NAKIA WANT HIM INVOLVED IN COMBAT?

YOUR PARDON, LADIES!

WE MUST INSPECT YOUR BELONGINGS BEFORE YOU ENTER THE PALACE.

WE HAVE ORDERS FROM HIS MAJESTY'S CHIEF ADVISOR, ILBANI, TO SEARCH EVERYONE. NO EXCEPTIONS.

WE ARE PRINCESS YURI'S SERVANTS, COME ALL THE WAY FROM HATTUSA. WHY WOULD YOU DETAIN US?

EXCUSE ME?

SECURITY'S REALLY GOTTEN TIGHT LATELY.

THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE, SINCE WE'LL SOON BE AT WAR.

IF ILBANI BELIEVES THIS IS NECESSARY, THEN IT IS.

THAT'S RIGHT. HIS MAJESTY HAS COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN HIM.

AND HE'S POISED TO BECOME THE NEXT CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE STAYING IN THE PALACE RIGHT NOW, SO DON'T LOLLYGAG.

ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET ALL THE ROOMS MADE UP.

...THE WEST WING TO ME.

YOU MAY LEAVE...

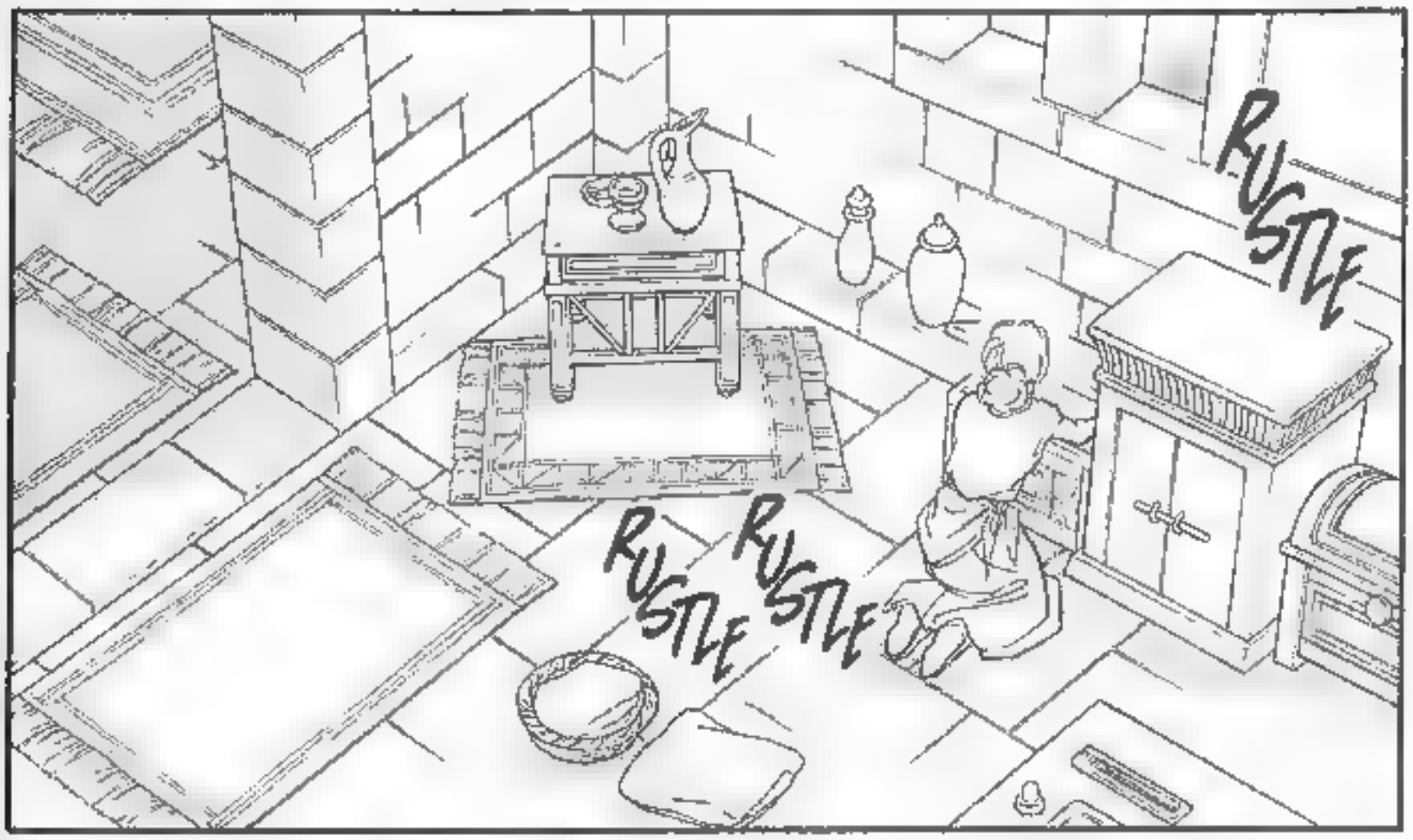
SEARCH THE BELONGINGS OF YOUR KING AND HIS AIDES, FIND OUT IF THEY'RE HIDING ANYTHING.

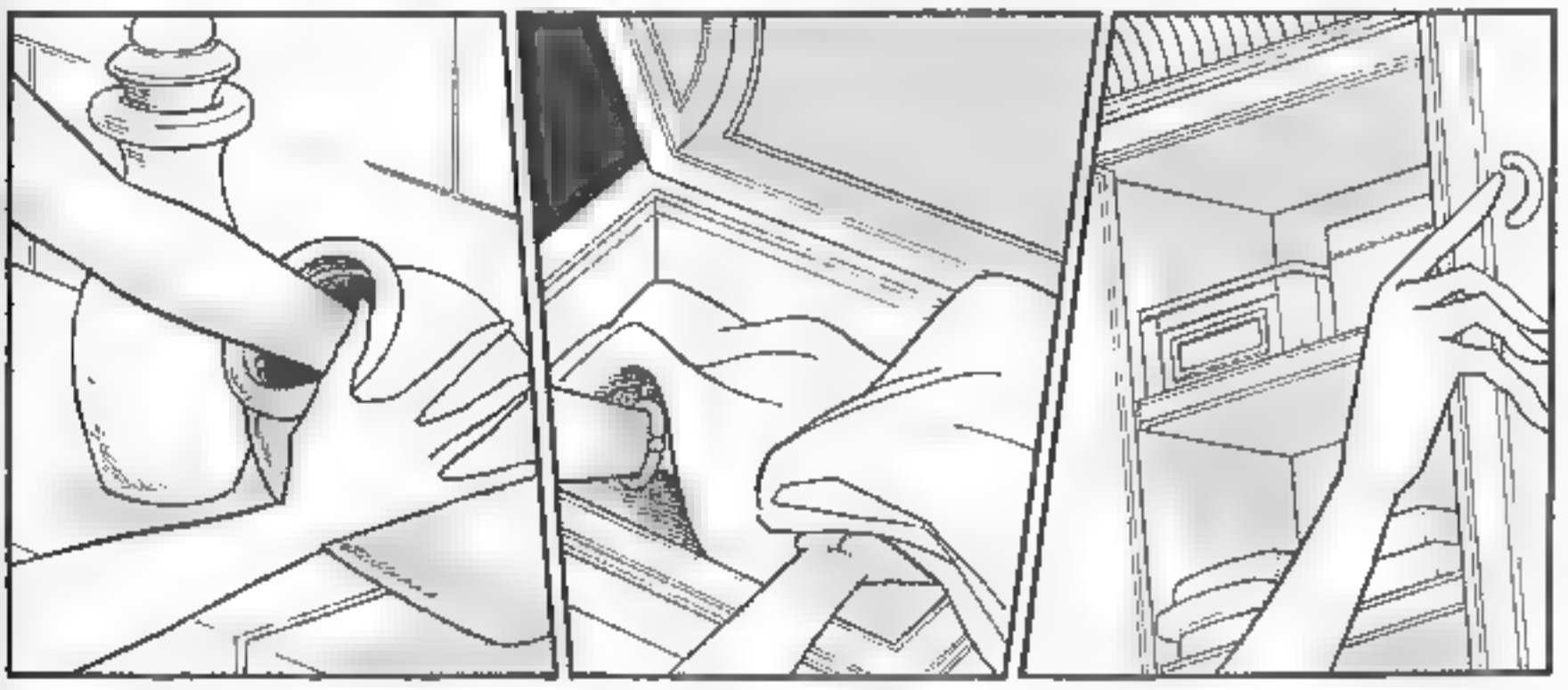
AND THEY'RE HUGE!

YOU SURE? THAT INCLUDES ILBAN'S LIVING QUARTERS.

IF THEY ARE, YOU'LL KNOW IT WHEN YOU SEE IT.

OKAY, THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF PALACE FOR THE REST OF US, SO LET'S HUSTLE.
...
...YOU CAN. GOOD LUCK!
WELL, ADHA, IF ANYONE CAN DO ALL THAT...


RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE



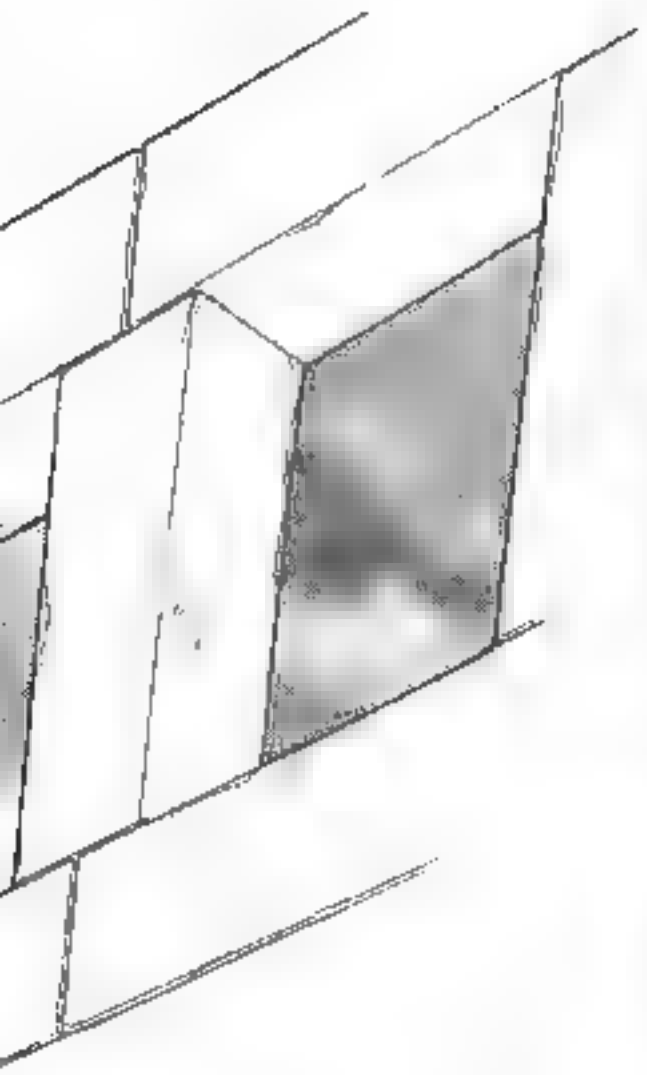
KLANK
BANG
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG

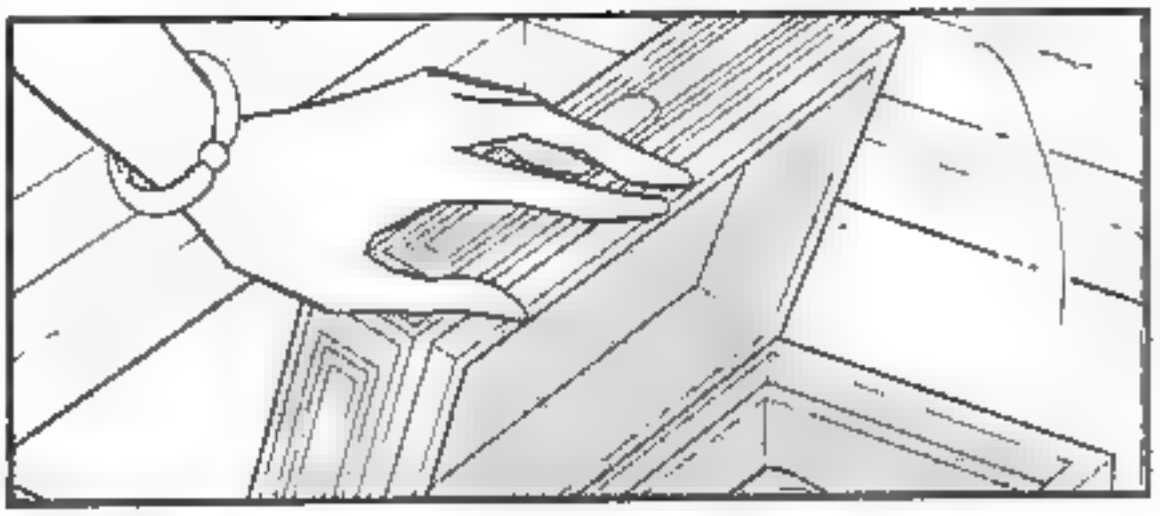
...

...

SQUEE

KLUNK





KLOP KLOP KLOP

A MESSENGER!

WITH NEWS FROM THE FRONT!

YOUR MAJESTY!

UGARIT FORCES HAVE ENCOUNTERED EGYPTIAN TROOPS IN NORTHERN BYBLOS!

THEY ARE ENGAGED AT THIS MOMENT!

THAT DIDN'T TAKE LONG.

K'KKURI, HAVE THE KIZWATNA FORCES DEPLOY JUST BEHIND THE FRONT-..INES.

BROTHER, WI... YOU PLEASE LEAD YOUR TROOPS TO THE SOUTH OF BE'DA?

YES, SIR!

AT ONCE, YOUR MAJESTY.

YURI!

ASSEMBLE MY TROOPS OUTSIDE THE PALACE.

YES, SIR!

SO IT BEGINS!

AND IT MAY BE FROM EGYPT?

I DON'T KNOW. IT'S WRITTEN IN AKKADIAN, SO I COULDN'T READ IT.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

AKKADIAN IS THE LANGUAGE OF OFFICIALDOM IN THIS REGION. QUEEN [redacted] USED IT IN HER LETTERS TO QUEEN NEFERTITI.

IT... COULD BE ONE OF THOSE MISSIVES!

YOU SAY YOU FOUND...

...A LETTER HIDDEN IN ILBANI'S ROOM?

...I CAN GET IT THROUGH PALACE SECURITY.

I DON'T THINK...

YOU WILL GET THAT LETTER ...

...AND BRING IT TO ME.

...YOU WILL DESTROY IT, EVEN IF IT COSTS YOU YOUR LIFE.

AS YOU CANNOT BRING IT TO ME...

YES, THE RISK WOULD BE TOO GREAT.

YES... SIR.

I'LL ACCOMPANY THE TROOPS!

BRING ASLAN TO THE FRONT GATE FOR ME!

WE'LL AWAIT YOUR SAFE RETURN.

OUR BEST WISHES GO WITH YOU, ISHTAR!

THANK YOU!

STAY BUSY AND DON'T WORRY!

YES, MA'AM!

...WILL FIND REST, CARE AND COMFORT WHEN THEY RETURN.

WE MUST KEEP THIS PLACE IN ORDER SO OUR SOLDIERS...

ALL RIGHT!

I WOULD DEARLY LOVE TO DEAL WITH NAKIA NOW...

...BUT THE CONFLICT WITH EGYPT COMES FIRST. ILBANI WILL KEEP THAT LETTER SAFE IN THE MEANTIME.

AS LONG AS WE HAVE THAT LETTER, THE DAYS OF NAKIA'S AUTHORITY AS QUEEN DOWAGER ARE NUMBERED!

NOW... IT'S TIME FOR WAR!

SHA-

AND MAY IT END ALL OTHERS!

SHUM

UM.. JUST ONE OR TWO MORE THINGS TO DO.

HEY, ADHA.

DIDN'T YOU FINISH THE WEST WING?

CREAK

KLUNK

WHY CAN'T I BE LIKE HER AND JOIN THE FIGHT? I CAN USE A SWORD!

BUT YURI ISHTAR'S A LADY, AND SHE'S LEADING HIS MAJESTY'S TROOPS!

ILBANI!

YOU'VE GOTTA LET ME TO GO TO THE BATTLE-FIELD!

YURI ISHTAR IS AN EX-CEPTION.

NO! I'LL PESTER YOU UNTIL YOU SAY YES!

I MUST CHANGE MY CLOTHES AND GO TO THE TEMPLE.

SO IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

THE BATTLE-FIELD IS NO PLACE FOR A HIGHBORN LADY...

...PRINCESS ALEXANDRA.

OH?

IS ANYTHING AMISS?

SIR, A SERVANT...

...IS STILL BUSY PREPARING YOUR ROOM.

PWFT

KLUNK

NO, SIR.

JUST A MINOR DETAIL...

CREAK

...

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN SHUT YOUR DOOR AND I'LL GO AWAY, YOU...

WELCOME HOME, SIR.

YOU SHOULD HAVE FINISHED SOME TIME AGO.

HUH... ILBANI'S ROOM...

I TRUST EVERY-THING IS IN ORDER NOW?

I FORGOT TO PLACE AROMATIC OIL...

MY APOLO-GIES, SIR.

...AT YOUR BEDSIDE. PLEASE FORGIVE ME.

WAIT!

...SO I LEFT WHEAT FLOUR IN THE GAP BETWEEN THE PAVINGS.

THE FLOUR ISN'T THERE NOW.

SO SOMEONE MOVED THIS PARTICULAR STONE.

MOVE THE RUG?

SIR, I DIDN'T...

IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME THIS RUG HAS BEEN DISTURBED...

...IF YOU WERE PLACING AROMATIC OIL BY MY BED?

WHY MOVE THIS RUG...

GUARDS!

STOP THAT WOMAN!

DASH

ADHA? WHAT'S GOING ON?

LET GO OF ME! LET GO!

DON'T BRING IT TO ME...

DESTROY IT...

DESTROY IT EVEN IF IT COSTS YOU YOUR LIFE!

DASH

I WANT *ANSWERS* FROM HER!

DON'T LET THAT HAPPEN!

GRAB HER! SHE'S GOING TO JUMP!

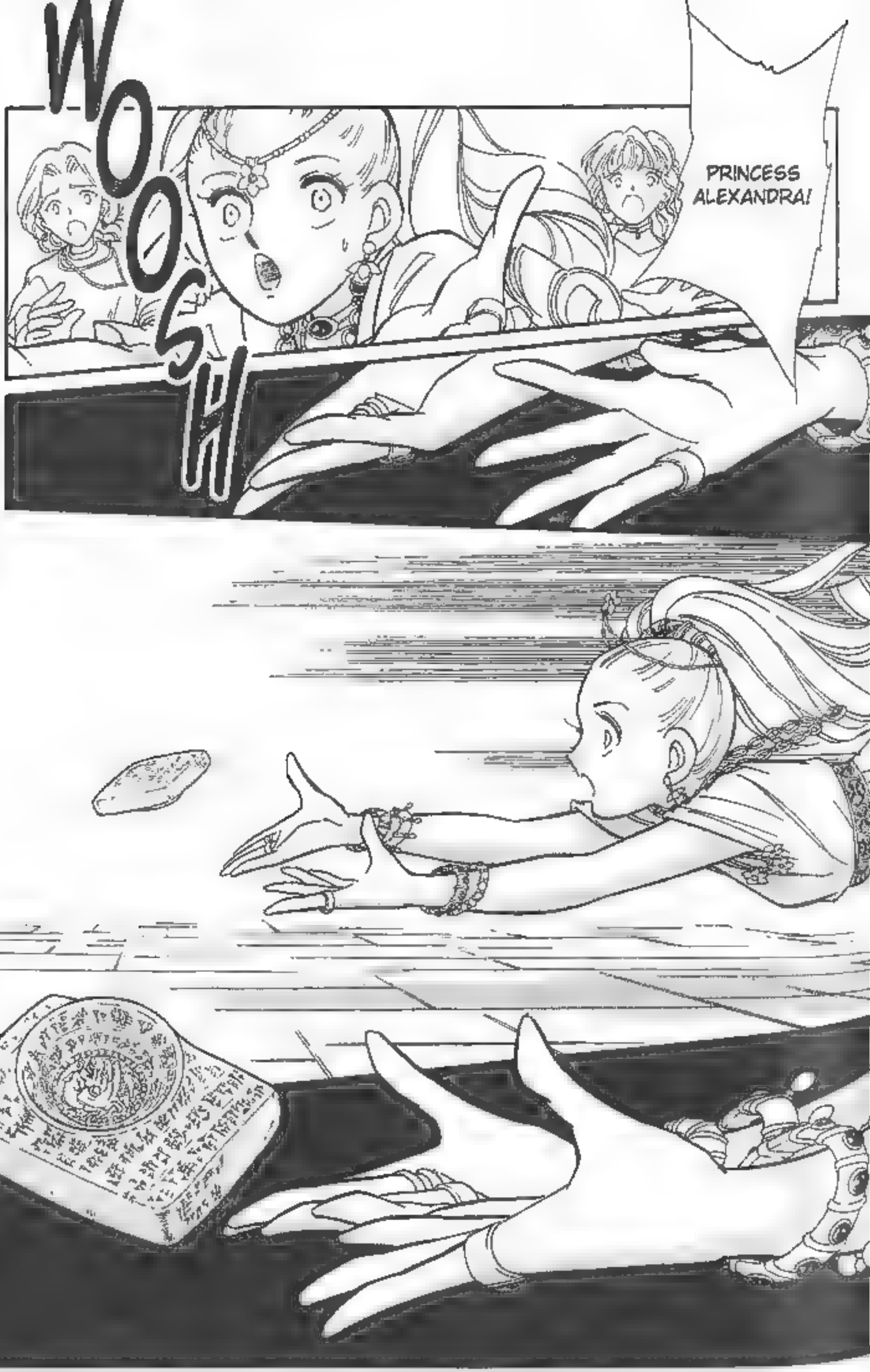
DESTROY IT!

GASP

LET ME GO!

WHUP

AH!


WOOSH
PRINCESS ALEXANDRA!

CRASH

OH NOOOO!

ADHA...

...PLEASE EXPLAIN YOURSELF!

WHAT WAS ALL THAT ABOUT?!

SNAG

...

WHOMP

SIR! OH MY GOD!

URGH!

SPLASH

KOFF

UHH...

SPLOSH

ADHA!

WHAT HAVE I...

WHAT HAVE I DONE?

LISTEN ADHA...

...DO YOU REMEMBER WHO DID THIS TO YOU?

YOU'VE BEEN UNDER SOMEONE'S CONTROL.

HE WAS BLOND, WORE A BLACK CLOAK AND...AND HAD ONLY *ONE EYE!*

IT WAS A PRIEST!

Y-YES, SIR, I DO!

I'M SORRY, ILBANI!

A PRIEST WITH ONE EYE!

I'VE DONE SOMETHING... TERRIBLE!

...I COULDN'T REACH IT IN TIME! I'M SO SORRY!

I...I TRIED TO CATCH WHAT SHE THREW, BUT...

THIS WAS...

...PRETTY IMPORTANT, WASN'T IT!

ILBANI!

...BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU THINK. IT WAS A DECOY...

YES IT WAS, HIGHNESS...

SMIRK

...FOR THE REAL ONE, WHICH I KEEP WITH ME.

SO I TRIED TO SAVE A FAKE?

Boy, I feel stupid!

OH!

YOU AND I MAY NOT BE SOLDIERS, HIGH-NESS...

...BUT WE MAKE OUR OWN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WAR EFFORT.

YOU SEE, WIELDING A SWORD ISN'T ALL THERE IS TO FIGHTING AN ENEMY.

IT WAS A VALIANT EFFORT, AND I HOPE A VALUABLE LESSON.

ILBANI, WILL YOU...

...REPORT THIS TO HIS MAJESTY AND ISHTAR?

IN DUE COURSE, HIGHNESS.

BUT I DON'T WANT TO DISTRACT THEM. THEY HAVE ENOUGH TO CONTEND WITH RIGHT NOW.

SECURE THE TOWN! LET NO ONE IN OR OUT WITHOUT MY AUTHORIZATION!

AND FIND THAT ONE-EYED PRIEST!

AT ONCE, SIR!

IT'S PAST TIME HE WAS DEALT WITH!

THIS PRIEST MUST BE URHI SHALMA NAKIA'S RIGHT-HAND MAN

SHF

I'VE WAITED FOR WORD, BUT... NOTHING.

I MUST ACCEPT THAT I'VE FAILED...

...AND FIND SOME OTHER WAY TO STOP THAT LETTER FROM REACHING HATTUSA!

BYBLOS...

LOOK!

THERE THEY ARE!

THE EGYPTIANS!

I'LL GO BACK AND REPORT.

STAY HERE AND KEEP AN EYE ON THEM!

RIGHT!

WE'VE RECEIVED A REPORT FROM THE FRONT, SIR!

THE EGYPTIANS HAVE REACHED THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF BYBLOS!

UGARIT...

DO WE KNOW WHOSE FLAGS THEY'RE FLYING?

VERY WELL!

YES, SIR!

THEY'RE MARCHING UNDER PHARAOH HOREMHEB!

...AND HETEPHERES ARE ALSO DISPLAYED!

THE FLAGS OF GENERALS ANKTIK, NEKEB...

AND RAMSES?

HAS *HIS* FLAG BEEN SPOTTED?

HO!

ALL EXCELLENT WARRIORS.

YES, ISHTAR!

GENERAL RAMSES' FLAG FLIES AT THE VAN!

NO SURPRISE THERE.

WHERE ELSE WOULD HE BE?

...I'LL NEED TO BE AT THE FRONT TO GIVE THEM A PROPER WELCOME.

SMIRK

WITH SUCH COMPANY COMING...

ROAR

HIS MAJESTY IS GOING TO THE FRONT!

NOW COMES MY REAL TEST AS DAL MESHED!

KAIL'S COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

GULP

HEED ME, DAL MESHED!

YES, SIR?

WHAT?

NEVER FORGET THAT THERE IS MORE AT STAKE HERE THAN VICTORY OVER THE EGYPTIANS.

BEFORE YOU LEFT HATTUSA, NAKIA AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS PLEDGED...

...THAT IF YOU FULFIL YOUR ROLE AS DAL MESHEDI IN THE WAR AGAINST EGYPT...

...MEANS EVEN MORE TO THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION. WHEN I RETURN TO HATTUSA WITH NAKIA'S LETTER, YOU MUST ACCOMPANY ME.

KAIL!

...THEY WILL APPROVE OUR MARRIAGE. WHAT THAT MEANS TO YOU AND ME...

IF THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN, OUR VICTORY HERE WILL BE MEANING-LESS!

WHEN NAKIA IS DEPOSED, YOU MUST BE THERE TO STEP INTO THE POSITION OF TAWANANNA.

MORE NEWS FROM THE FRONT, SIR!

UGARIT TROOPS ARE FULLY ENGAGED WITH THE EGYPTIANS IN NORTH-EASTERN BYBLOS!

YANK

FRANKLY, I'M RELIEVED.

THINGS ARE MOVING FAST!

THE WAITING WAS GETTING TEDIOLS!

AWP!

THE BATTLE HAS COM-MENCED!

YURI!

WATCH YOURSELF, OKAY?

BRING ME A VICTORY...

...AND RETURN ALIVE AND WELL!

...THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT IT SIGNIFIES!

WHAT'S THAT SAYING ...?

"FISH OR CUT BAIT!" I THINK...

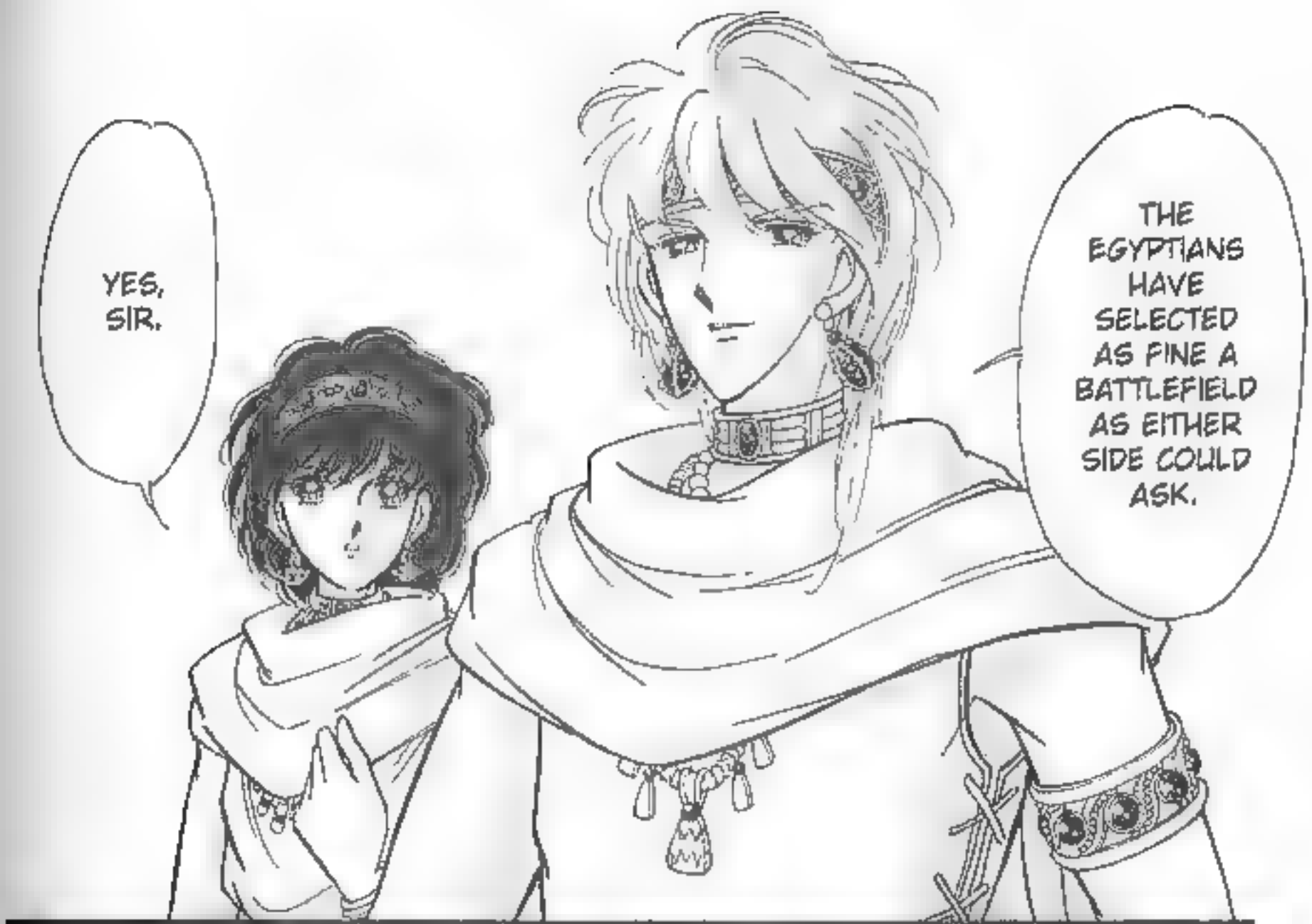
COMMAND-ERS! GET YOUR UNITS MOVING!

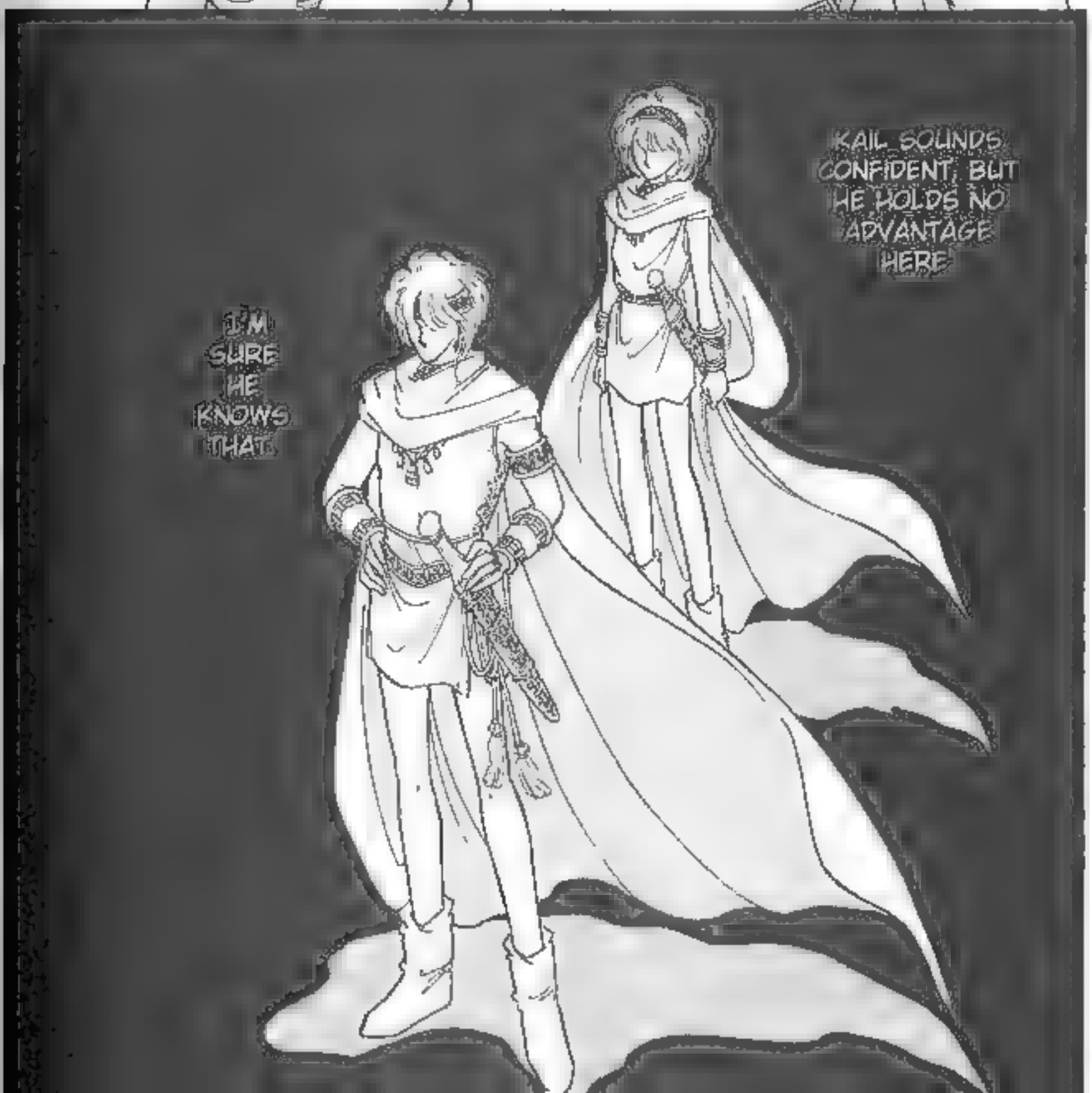
WE HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH EGYPT IN BYBLOS!

THE EGYPTIAN FORCES, ARRAYED AT THE SOUTHERN END, WAITED THREE DAYS FOR THE HITTITE ARMIES TO ARRIVE AT THE NORTHERN END.

STRATEGICALLY LOCATED BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE HITTITE EMPIRE, IT'S BEEN THE SITE OF A NUMBER OF MAJOR BATTLES.

THERE IS A PLATEAU IN NORTHERN BYBLOS FORMED BY THE ORONTES RIVER. THE TOPOGRAPHY IS WELL-SUITED FOR CHARIOT WARFARE.


YES, SIR.
THE EGYPTIANS HAVE SELECTED AS FINE A BATTLEFIELD AS EITHER SIDE COULD ASK.


I'M SURE HE KNOWS THAT.
KAIL SOUNDS CONFIDENT, BUT HE HOLDS NO ADVANTAGE HERE

...MEET RAMSES ON EQUAL TERMS.

PERHAPS, AFTER ALL, HE PREFERS TO...

THE ARZAWAN TROOPS ARE ENGAGING GENERAL ANKTIK'S FORCES ON THE WESTERN SIDE!

YOUR MAJESTY!

THAT SUITS ME FINE.

I HOPE HE ENJOYS THE SHOW.

...AND WATCH WHILE RAMSES AND I HAVE IT OUT.

SO THE PHARAOH WILL STAND BY...

HOREMHEB AND HIS TROOPS ARE STATIONED AT THE CENTER OF THE PLATEAU!

GENERAL RAMSES' FORCES ARE IN THE FORWARD POSITION, SERVING AS VANGUARD FOR THE PHARAOH!

I GAVE UP MY WORLD, MY FAMILY, MY ERA FOR HIM.

IT'S BECAUSE OF KAIL...

...THAT I CHOSE TO REMA N IN THIS WORLD AND TIME.

I'M HERE FOR HIM, AS HIS LOVER AND, RIGHT NOW, HIS DAL MESHEDI.

OKAY, RAMSES, BRING IT ON!

THEN WE'LL GO MEET THEM!

YURI, STAY HERE AND-

KKOP

EH?

GASP

YOUR MAJESTY!

RAMSES' TROOPS ARE ADVANCING!

HADI! YOU AND I WILL TAKE THE RIGHT!

YES, ISHTAR!

RUSAFA! YOU AND RYUI TAKE HIS MAJESTY'S LEFT FLANK!

RIGHT, YOUR MAJESTY?

NO DAL MESHEDI WOULD DARE COWER BEHIND HER MONARCH.

SHE'S... IMPOSSIBLE!

HAR HAR HAH

A TRULY *SIGNAL* HONOR!

I SEE THE KING'S FLAG...

...AND THE DAL MESHEDI'S.

KLINK

TODAY WE TEACH HER IT IS NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH!

LOOK THERE, MEN! EGYPT HAS SENT US THE ***BEST*** SHE HAS TO OFFER!

THE HITTITE KING HAS COME TO OFFER US A CHANCE AT ***TOTAL VICTORY!***

FORWARD, MEN! BRING DOWN MURSILI II!

CLANK
SHRAK
ROAR
AARGH

NOT NOW...
NOT EVER!

MY JOB IS
TO PROTECT
KAI..

I'LL LET
NO ENEMY
NEAR HIM!

WHAT?!

OH MY
GOD!

KOP

ROAAARR

BUT BOTH ARMIES ARE MAINTAINING FORMATION.

I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT HAPPEN BEFORE!

CLOSE COMBAT USUALLY LEADS TO DISORDER IN THE RANKS.

AAR

HH

THAT'S BECAUSE KAIL AND RAMSES COMMAND THEM..

...AND NEITHER IS GOING TO MAKE AN OBVIOUS BLUNDER.

KLANG

KLINK

THIS BATTLE MAY NOT BE OVER ANYTIME SOON.

YAAH

FORTUNE'S VAGARIES ALONE WILL DECIDE THIS BATTLE!

HOW LIKE YOU, MURSILI...

...TO BLUNT MY EVERY THRUST!

BRILLIANT, RAMSES!

YOUR TROOPS OFFER NO OPENINGS!

I'M OKAY!

PRIN-CESS YURI!

CLANG

KNK

AT SOME POINT...

...THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY!

ROAR

ROAR

ROAR

ROAR

THE QUESTION IS, WHAT WILL IT BE?

AND WHO WILL BE THE BENEFICIARY?

WHERE IS IT?

ZING!!

AH!

SHWAK

WATCH OUT! THERE'S ANOTHER!

PRINCESS YURI!

KLOP KLOP

ISHTAR! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

K

THOOK

THUD!

PLATOON COM-MANDER!

AAGH!

RAAAH

HURRA!!

WHERE'D *THEY* COME FROM?

AN ENEMY UNIT WAS LURKING IN AMBUSH!

GET THE INJURED TO THE REAR!

THE REST OF US WILL REPEL THIS ATTACK!

IF SO, IT'S A RECKLESS DIVISION OF A COMMANDER'S FOCUS IN A TIGHTLY COORDINATED ENGAGEMENT LIKE THIS!

...OR ARE MY TROOPS BEING SPECIFICALLY TARGETED?

I CAN'T BELIEVE RAMSES WOULD RISK IT!

CLANG

KLINK

A SIMPLE AMBUSH...

NO!

RUSAFA MUST HOLD HIS MAJESTY'S LEFT FLANK!

PRINCESS YURI!

SHALL I SIGNAL RUSAFA FOR HELP?

YAAGH!

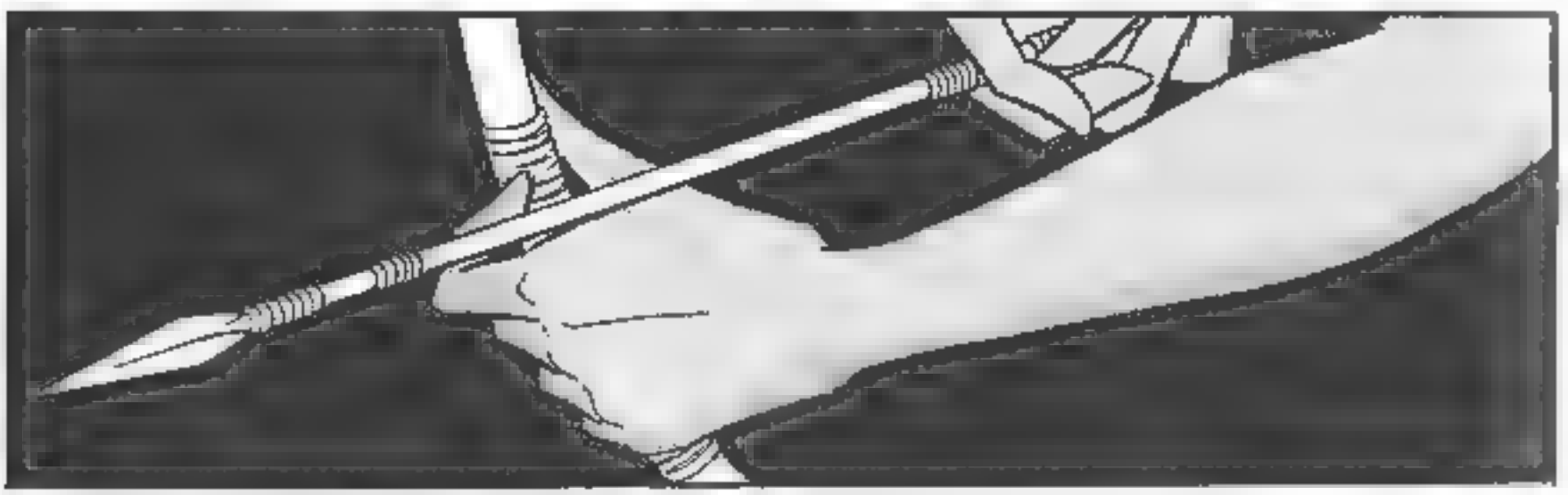
AARGH!

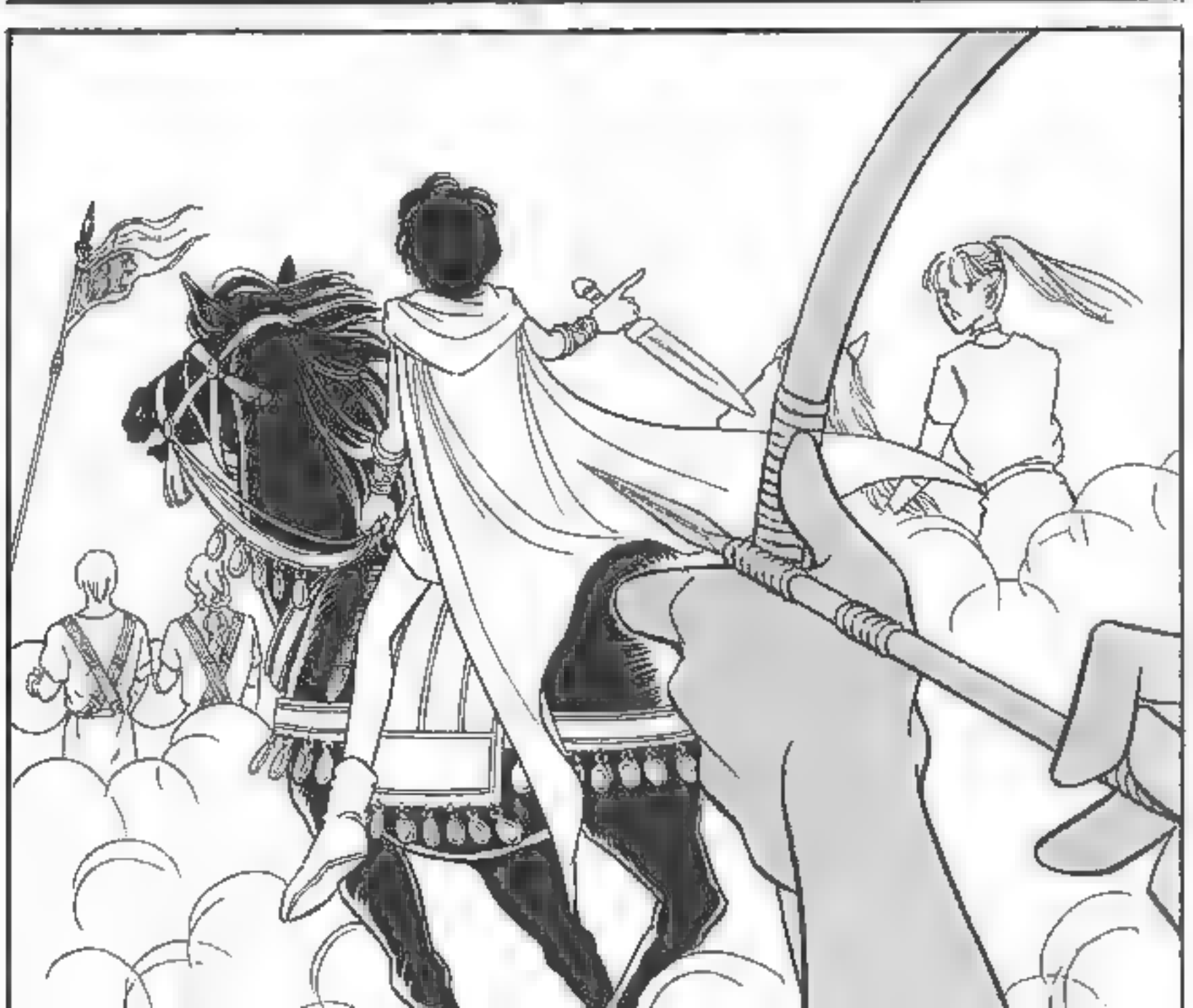
THOOK

SLASH

FALL BACK! IN ORDER!

ATTEN-TION!





GRR

I'M FINE! HOW ABOUT YOU?

ARE YOU OKAY, PRINCESS YURI?

ASLAN!

SHOOK

PRINCESS YURI!

TU
MP!

GASP
THUD

WHAT THE... *YOU!*

TAHARQA!

QUITE RIGHT.

I AM EXTREMELY HONORED...

...THAT YOU REMEMBER ME.

ROARARÓR

WHAT'S HAPPENING THERE?

I GAVE STRICT ORDERS TO HOLD FORMATION...

...BUT THAT PLATOON'S BREAKING RANKS!

WHO OPPOSES HIM THERE?

THAT IDIOT! WHAT POS-SESSED HIM?

TAHARQA SENT HIS PLATOON AT THE HITTITES' RIGHT FLANK!

I'M SORRY, SIR!

SIR!

IT'S TRUE! THE DAL MESHEDI IS LEADING THAT FLANK!

THE DAL MESHEDI! SEE THE FLAG?

THEIR DAL... *YURI?!*

AFTER ALL, I WAS JUST A PAWN TO BE SACRIFICED TO YOUR SLIMY SUBTERFUGES!

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE SURPRISED I'M STILL ALIVE?

OR PERHAPS YOU DON'T CARE IF I AM OR NOT!

TAHARQA...

...THE EGYPTIAN WHO SIDED WITH ME WHEN I ORGANIZED A REBELLION AT ASWAN.

I DECEIVED HIM IN ORDER TO SAVE RAMSES, AND NEVER EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE THE REBELLION MATTER! HE MUST BELIEVE I BETRAYED HIM!

...I JOINED THE EGYPTIANS FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF KILLING YOU!

YOU SHOULD KNOW...

I HEAR YOU, TAHARQA! BUT LISTEN...

AT LEAST GENERAL RAMSES PLAYED FAIR.

HE HEARD OUR GRIEVANCES, THOUGH HE WASN'T OBLIGED TO, AND H.S PUNISHMENTS WEREN'T EXCESSIVE.

TO WHAT? YOUR FEEBLE EXCUSES?

AS YOU SEE, HE EVEN LET ME JOIN HIS ARMY.

ALL TO SERVE SOME FOUL HITTITE SCHEME AGAINST EGYPT!
YOU USED US AND THEN TOSSED US ASIDE!
PLEASE, TAHARQA, HEAR ME OUT—
AND GENERAL RAMSES WILL BE PLEASED THAT THERE IS ONE LESS HITTITE SPY IN THE WORLD!
I WILL HEAR NOTHING FROM YOUR LYING LIPS!

THE END

AGH!

ASLAN!

PRINCESS YURI!

BWRRR

CRAZY HORSE!

KLANK

KLOP KLOP

KLOP KLOP

WHUP

YANK

NO, I'M ALL RIGHT.

STOP FOR A SECOND, HADI!

KLOP KLOP KLOP

DID THAT MAN HURT YOU?

TAHARQA!

I'LL NEVER OFFER YOU ANY EXCUSES! I DID WHAT I DID, AND ACHIEVED WHAT I SET OUT TO ACHIEVE!

BUT NOT HERE, AND NOT NOW! OR DO YOU THINK SO LITTLE OF GENERAL RAMSES THAT YOU WOULD UPSET HIS BATTLE PLAN LIKE THIS?!

YES, I BETRAYED YOU! AND I WILL NOT DENY YOU THE RIGHT TO SEEK JUSTICE FOR THAT!

WHEN IT COMES TO BIG DECISIONS...

...ABOUT THE TWISTS AND TURNS OF LIFE...

OKAY!

...IT'S AWFULLY HARD TO KNOW WHICH PATH TO CHOOSE.

A DAY OF RECK-ONING!

VERY WELL, ISHTAR! ANOTHER DAY!

PRIN-CESS YURI...

LET'S GO, HADI.

HE CAUGHT ME OFF GUARD...

THE OVERALL BATTLE SHOULDN'T BE AFFECTED.

...BUT ONLY MEANT TO AVENGE HIMSELF.

TA-RA-RA-BOOM

ASLAN?

IN THE END, ALL I CAN DO...

...IS TAKE THE ONE THAT SEEMS BEST.

TA-RA-RA-BOOM

YA-KA

KLOP

KLOP

HOW RIGHT NEFERTITI WOULD BE TO SAY, "I TOLD YOU SO!"

I SHOULD HAVE TOLD HIM THAT FROM THE BEGINNING. NOW I MUST ACCEPT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT LAPSE.

TAHARQA DOESN'T REALIZE THAT BY HELPING TO SAVE RAMSES, THE REBELLION ACHIEVED FAR MORE THAN IT WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE.

KLOP

TODAY THERE IS A WAR TO FIGHT... AND WIN!

THERE WILL BE A RECKONING, TAHARQA, BUT NOT TODAY!

THE ORDER NOW IS— *ATTACK!*

THAT AMBUSH WAS JUST A DIVERSION!

GET BACK INTO FORMATION, ON THE DOUBLE!

RROAARRR

I SAW SIGNS OF A SKIRMISH INVOLVING A LATERAL ATTACK OVER THERE!

IS SHE HOLDING THE RIGHT FLANK?

HOW'S YURI DOING?

I UNDER-STAND A FEW EGYPTIANS JUST GOT A BIT OVER-ZEALOUS.

IT'S BEEN DEALT WITH, YOUR MAJESTY.

HOW I'VE WANTED TO TUCK HER SAFELY AWAY INSIDE THE PALACE...

YURI...

BUT WHAT MAN, EVEN A KING, WOULD DARE HOPE TO KEEP HER THERE?

THIS MAY BE OUR BEST CHANCE TO DRIVE THROUGH AND STOP THEIR ADVANCE!

THE EGYPTIAN'S RIGHT FLANK IS STRETCHED THIN!

CONCENTRATE ON THAT!

ROAR

ROAR

ROAR

WE'LL PLAY OUT SOME ROPE! FALL BACK, IN FORMATION— SLOWLY!

SHORE UP THAT RIGHT FLANK!

HE'S ORDERING A RETREAT ***NOW?!***

WHILE OUR GENERALS ARE STILL FIGHTING?!

WHAT?

...HE IS LEADING HIS CONTINGENT TO THE HILL BEHIND HIM, AND HAS ORDERED ALL UNITS AT THE FRONT TO RETREAT!

GENERAL RAMSES! PHARAOH HOREMHEB SENDS HIS REGARDS AND WISHES TO INFORM YOU...

THAT MESSAGE WAS NOT RECEIVED.

SIR?

I AM HERE TO ENGAGE AND DEFEAT THE HITTITES!

THIS BATTLE IS STILL OURS TO WIN!

HAKOBA

KLOP KLOP KLOP

GENERAL RAMSES HAS AN UNCANNY WAY OF MAKING THE RIGHT MOVE AT THE RIGHT TIME, KIKKURI.

TODAY MAY NOT BE OUR DAY, SIR.

THE EGYPTIANS ARE FALLING BACK, BUT IN PRECISE TACTICAL ORDER.

AND THE HITTITES HAVE STOPPED ADVANCING!

GENERAL RAMSES' FORCES ARE NOT RETREATING!

PHARAOH!

ROAR ROAR ROAR

HO!

PHARAOH! I'M SORRY, I MUST KEEP MY ATTENTION ON THE BATTLE.

YOU CAN, HOWEVER, WITNESS A GLORIOUS TRIUMPH.

RAMSES!

RATTLE

RATTLE

RATTLE

YOU WILL RECEIVE DUE CREDIT FOR YOUR WORK THIS DAY.

BUT IT'S TIME FOR ME TO TAKE COMMAND.

YOU'VE DONE WELL, GENERAL RAMSES.

!!

KOAHAR

EXCUSE ME, PHARAOH, BUT HE'S *MY* OPPONENT!

THIS DISPLEASES YOU?

AS PHARAOH, AM I NOT THE ONE TO TOPPLE THE HITTITE KING?

...IT MUST BE THE PHARAOH WHO DEFEATS THE ENEMY!

TO PRESERVE THE HONOR OF EGYPT...

TAKE CARE, GENERAL!

THE HONOR OF EGYPT?! WHICH YOU BRING UP ONLY AFTER IT APPEARS VICTORY IS AT HAND?!

HONOR, IT SEEMS, IS *FRAGILE* INDEED!

ROAR
ROAR

PERHAPS DUE TO A CHANGE OF COMMAND?

I SEE A SHIFT IN EGYPTIAN ACTIVITY, SIR!

VERY UNWISE...

...HOREM-HEB HAS RELIEVED RAMSES.

I'D SAY...

PHARAOH!

THE HITTITES ARE RETREATING!

ROAR

BUT IT MEANS WE'VE CAUGHT A BREAK!

HAVE ALL UNITS KEEP FORMATION AND FALL BACK!

ROAR

ALL UNITS! INITIATE PURSUIT!

TURNING TAIL, EH?

I DON'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF THIS!

TO THE ORTHEAST, SIR.

WHAT'S THE DIRECTION OF THEIR RETREAT?

WHAT?!

ROAR

THAT WAY LIES... OH MY GOD!

NORTHEAST!

GASP

MURSILI II IS LAYING A *TRAP* FOR YOU!

HUH? WHY?

...

PHARAOH! CALL OFF THE PURSUIT!

OUR FOOT SOLDIERS WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THEM!

...IS A PERFECT PLACE FOR MITANNI CHARIOTEERS TO DRIVE DOWN ON US!

THAT WIDE PLAIN TO THE NORTHEAST...

YOU SPEAK AS IF IT'S POSSIBLE I MIGHT LOSE TO THE HITTITES.

THAT, GENERAL, IS NOT VERY RESPECT-FUL.

AND YOU THINK MURSILI II WON'T HAVE THOUGHT TO SECURE A CROSSING POINT?

I BEG YOU, PHARAOH, DON'T BE LURED IN LIKE THIS.

FEH!

BEYOND LIES THE ORONTES. WE'LL PUSH THOSE CHARIOTS RIGHT INTO THE RIVER.

KING TOTOMESU FOUGHT THERE OVER A HUNDRED YEARS AGO...

...AND EXPANDED EGYPTIAN DOMINANCE TO KARKEMISH. I SHALL DO NO LESS!

YOU FORGET OUR GLORIOUS HISTORY ON THAT PLAIN!

HMPH! IF WARS WERE DECIDED BY THE VOICE OF HISTORY....

...FAR FEWER SOLDIERS WOULD TAKE EARLY JOURNEYS INTO ETERNAL SHADOW.

SIR? AREN'T WE...

...GOING WITH THEM?

FORWARD! DRIVE THE HITTITES...

...INTO THE ORONTES RIVER!

HAH

TA-RAMP TA-RAMP TA-RAMP

THE EGYPTIANS ARE PURSUING.

INDEED.

THERE'S A SEA OF GREEN ALONG THE RIVER BANK...

WHEN WE CAME OVER THE HILL, THE WIND GREETED US WITH THE RUSTLE OF REEDS AND THE SCENT OF WATER.

TA-SHOO

TA-RAMP
TA-RAMP

TA-RAMP
TA-RAMP

...THE AIR IS FILLED WITH THE RUMBLE OF MITANNI CHARIOTS!

NOW...

TA-
RA
MP

THE EGYPTIANS HAVE CHARGED...

...STRAIGHT INTO THE GRINDER!

YURI! WHAT HAVE YOU TO REPORT?

KLOP KLOP KLOP

KAIL! I MEAN, YOUR MAJESTY!

...HOW FAR TO PRESS IT UNTIL YOU DECLARE VICTORY?

THE BATTLE IS PROCEEDING AS PLANNED, BUT WILL YOU TELL US...

...I'LL OFFER OUR ADVERSARY A PEACE TREATY.

I ONLY ASK FOR ONE THING, DAL MESHED!...

...A CLEAR ESTABLISHMENT OF OUR SUPERIORITY. ONCE WE HAVE THAT...

A PEACE TREATY!

ONE GIANT STRIDE TOWARDS KAIL'S DREAM!

A PEACE TREATY?

NOTHING LESS.

WE'LL BRING THE ENEMY TO HEEL, THEN ASK THEM TO RETIRE...

...IN ACCORD, NOT DEFEAT.

WELL...

...WE'VE LOST AGAIN.

BUT, SIR, IT'S NOT OVER! THE PHARAOH'S STILL FIGHTING!

WHAT I FIND INTOLERABLE...

...IS THAT BUMBLER SNATCHING AWAY MY CHANCE TO FACE MURSILI!

IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE SURRENDERS.

SOMETIMES, SOLDIER, WE MUST ACCEPT THE INEVITABLE.

THOSE MITANNI CHARIOTS ARE FAR MORE THAN PHARAOH CAN HANDLE.

NOTHING TO BE DONE ABOUT IT, THOUGH.

THE ONE CONSOLATION IS...

...MURSILI AND I LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY!